

# TOPIC 7: yourCHOICE Snacks: “Chews” for Health

## Skill-Based Outcomes

Preteens who participate in this activity will be able to:

- ❖ Choose snacks for different reasons, and consider the reasons for the choices.
- ❖ Use food labels to make healthful snack choices.
- ❖ Tell how to enjoy snacks without overdoing on the amount.
- ❖ Make an easy food-group snack.

## Empowerment Messages

- ❖ Snacking the right way helps you get enough food to grow and stay healthy. Pick mostly lowfat foods from the five major food groups.
- ❖ Nutrition Facts on food labels can help you compare and choose snacks. Don’t let sweets and high-fat snacks crowd out snacks with more nutrients.
- ❖ Snacking is a great way to fit fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lowfat foods made from milk into your day’s food choices.
- ❖ Pay attention to how much—not just what—you snack on.
- ❖ By moving more and sitting less, you don’t need to concern yourself as much about overdoing on snacking. Active fun is a healthful substitute for mindless snacking.

## Activity Summary

(Icebreaker) **Snack Line—Find Your Place!** - Preteens arrange themselves along a snack continuum to explore their attitudes about healthful snacking.

- 1 Which Snack Has More Fat?** - Preteens work in small groups doing a demonstration to discover fat in some popular preteen snacks.
- 2 "5-20" Snack Vision** - By checking their results with *Nutrition Facts Cards*, they learn to use Nutrition Facts to compare and choose snacks for calories and other nutrients.
- 3 Snack Dilemmas** - Using decision-making steps, preteens come up with their own snack dilemmas then practice making sound snack choices that match their own needs.
- 4 (Afterschool Snack) Roll It Up!** - Preteens prepare and talk about Peanut Butter Rollups, an easy snack to make later at home.

(Wrap up) **What's yourCHOICE?** - Each person comes up with personal steps to snack for health—and so puts his or her "power of choice" in action.

## Getting Ready

### ● Read:

- ❖ Do You Know...? on the next page

### ● Display Posters:

- ❖ *Read It Before You Eat It!*
- ❖ *Feed Me!*
- ❖ *Move It!*
- ❖ *FIGHT BAC!*

### ● Get:

#### For "Which Snack Has More Fat?"

- ❖ 1/2 cup chips (not fat free), 1/2 cup pretzels
- ❖ 1 cookie, 1 graham cracker
- ❖ 1 small candy bar, 1 banana
- ❖ 1 piece regular cheese, 1 carrot stick
- ❖ 2 tablespoons peanut butter, 1 carton fat-free yogurt
- ❖ 1/4 cup water, 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- ❖ Brown paper toweling, markers

#### For "'5-20' Snack Vision"

- ❖ *Nutrition Facts Cards*: chips, pretzels, regular cookie, graham cracker, candy bar, banana, cheese, carrot, peanut butter, fat-free yogurt

#### For "Snack Dilemmas"

- ❖ Several large sheets of paper, tape, markers, adhesive notes

#### For "Roll It Up!" (snack activity)\*

- ❖ Ingredients: tortillas, peanut butter, sliced bananas, drained pineapple chunks, shredded carrots, and lettuce or sprouts
- ❖ Equipment: cutting board (grater or blender to shred carrots if needed), knives, paper plates with utensils to serve
- ❖ Table setting: paper plates, knives, napkins
- ❖ *Nutrition Facts Cards*: tortillas, peanut butter, bananas, pineapple chunks, carrots, lettuce or sprouts

\* If your program has been approved to serve USDA's Afterschool Snacks, the snack served as part of this activity may qualify for reimbursement. For each participant, **serve at least 1 tortilla and 2 tablespoons peanut butter.**

#### For "Wrapping Up: What's yourCHOICE?"

- ❖ "yourCHOICE" handout\*\* for each participant
- ❖ (Optional) some form of recognition for each participant

\*\* Reminder: Collect handouts for next session.

## Do You Know...?

**Is snacking okay?** Yes! Growing preteens need more food energy and nutrients than younger children. That nourishment can come from snacking: mostly lowfat choices from the food groups, less high-fat, low-nutrient snack choices, and not overdoing it with “too much” of a high-calorie food.

**How do snacks fit in?** No matter what your age, snacks can help you fill in the Pyramid gaps by helping you get enough of the foods and nutrients your body needs. Make snacks count toward food-group servings by choosing:

- ❖ *Plenty from the Bread Group:* bagel, pretzels, popcorn, muffin, breakfast cereal, or oatmeal cookie, among others.
- ❖ *More from the Vegetable and Fruit Groups:* raw vegetables, dried fruits, frozen fruit-juice bar, or whole fruits.
- ❖ *Enough from the Milk Group:* string cheese, lowfat yogurt, frozen yogurt, or flavored or unflavored lowfat milk.
- ❖ *Enough from the Meat Group:* hard-cooked egg, slice of meat, or handful of peanuts.
- ❖ *Less often Fats, Oils, and Sweets:* soda or candy.

**Why snack on vegetables?** When you choose vegetables, you paint your plate with color! Besides their good looks, dark-green leafy and deep-yellow vegetables can serve up a hefty amount of vitamin A and folic acid, nutrients that help keep you healthy. (Vitamin A is also great for healthy skin.) Plus, these foods are low in fat.

**How can you use food labels to make snack choices?** You can use food labels for snack choices. Nutrition Facts provide information about your snacks: for example, how big the serving is; how much fat, calcium, iron, and fiber it has; and how many calories one serving gives. The “5-20” guide helps you see if a food has more or less of some nutrients. Remember: double the numbers (calories and % Daily Values) for two servings.

*What snacks are nutrient rich yet low in fat and easy to make?* Each of these snacks counts toward servings from two or three food groups.

❖ **Ultra easy, no fuss**

- Yogurt, topped with fruits and nuts
- Baked tortilla chips, sliced cucumbers, jicama, or summer squash with salsa
- Baby carrots
- Two or more juices mixed in one glass

❖ **Easy, minor preparation**

- Ice cream sandwich made with oatmeal cookies
- Microwaved noodle soup mixed with corn or other vegetables, topped with cheese

- Peanut butter sandwich with banana slices or grated carrot
- Cut-up fruit in an unsugared ice cream cone

❖ **A little more effort**

- Fruit smoothie made with yogurt, lowfat ice cream or frozen yogurt, fruit, milk
- Ham and lettuce rolled up in a soft tortilla
- Raw, chopped veggies and sliced cheese or lean meat, tucked in pita bread with a little salad dressing drizzled on top
- Microwaved potato, topped with salsa or shredded cheese

*How can you snack for good health without giving up foods you like?*

- ❖ If you snack on foods that have some fat or sugar, no problem. Try this:
  - Just keep the amount you eat sensible in size: perhaps eat less, share with a friend, or eat them less often.
  - Substitute one snack for a version with less fat or added sugar, for example, fat-free chips for regular chips, frozen yogurt for ice cream, or a bagel for a doughnut.
  - Rather than snack right from the package, put your snack on a plate. That way you won't eat too much. That's good advice no matter what you eat!
- ❖ Move more; sit less. You won't need to be concerned as much about overdoing on snacking. Doing something active may even take the place of sitting and snacking.

*What if you snack even when you aren't hungry?* If you nibble when you're stressed, bored, lonely, or just out of habit, learn to do something in exchange for eating: go for a walk, pick some flowers, clean your room, call a friend!

## yourCHOICE Snacks: “Chews” for Health

### Topic 7 Activities

## Getting Started: **Snack Line— Find Your Place!**

*Start preteens thinking about their snack choices by asking each to find his or her place in a line that reflects snacking attitudes.*

Ask preteens to stand if they snacked yesterday, this week, this month. Continue until everyone is standing. Now that they’re all up, start the activity.

- ❖ **ASK:** How would you rate your attitude about snacking?
- ❖ **Show preteens a real or imaginary “snack line” in the room.** Each end represents a different attitude about snacking.
  - *One end:* I always choose snacks for my good health!
  - *Other end:* I eat what I like. I don’t think about healthful snacking.
- ❖ **Explain:** Many attitudes preteens have about snacking fit somewhere in between.
- ❖ **Have preteens place themselves along the “snack line,”** talking with those to their right and left to decide where they seem to fit. As the leader, **put yourself along the “snack line,” too.**

**Have them sit on the “line” and talk about their reasons for being where they placed themselves.** Keep the discussion open-ended so preteens talk freely, and everyone gets a chance to share his or her thoughts.

#### **Challenge their thinking:**

- ❖ How would you describe your place on the “snack line?” Why did you put yourselves there? **Talk about** the snack choices, the amounts, when and where they get snacks, who they snack with.
- ❖ What are your favorite snacks? Why?
- ❖ **POINT OUT:** Several weeks ago, we played “values charades” and talked about what was important to us. Do you remember what you said? How might changing your spot on the “snack line” match what’s important to you?
- ❖ How can you pick snacks that taste great and help keep you healthy, too?

*If time allows, have them move around more, rearranging themselves along the “snack line” to show other snacking practices. Talk about their position on the line, reasons for being there, and where might be the smartest place to be. For example, the “snack line” might have these “opposite ends”:*

- ❖ *Always snack when I’m stressed. / Never snack when I’m stressed.*
- ❖ *Always snack when I’m bored. / Never snack when I’m bored.*
- ❖ *Always eat the same snacks my friends do. / Never eat the same snacks my friends do.*

## Activity 1: Which Snack Has More Fat?

To relate snacking to what they learned from other topics, do a hands-on activity. They'll discover that fat "hides" in many of their favorite snack foods.

As review, ask two or three preteens who came to the "Tastes Great, Less Fat!" session (Topic 5) to share what they learned about eating less fat.

Divide preteens into small groups. Give each group a food pair\* to test for fat. For example:

- ❖ Regular chips and pretzels
- ❖ Cheese stick and carrot stick
- ❖ Graham cracker and cookie
- ❖ Peanut butter and fat-free yogurt
- ❖ Banana and candy bar

\* All 10 foods are on the *Feed Me!* poster, however, not all yogurts are fat free.

Before starting, talk about:

- ❖ Which snack would you pick? Why?
- ❖ Do you think either of your snack choices has fat? Why or why not?
- ❖ Why would you care about fat in your food choices? Review what they learned in Topic 5.

To find out, conduct this demonstration:

- ❖ **Have the groups rub both their snacks on brown paper toweling.** Using a marker, have them label both spots. (*Note: Notebook paper works, too, but the fat spots are less visible. The finish on grocery bags is less effective since the surface may not be absorbent.*)
- ❖ **Have them put 2 or 3 drops of water on another brown paper towel;** circle and label it as "water." Do the same with 2 or 3 drops of vegetable oil (a form of fat).
- ❖ **Let the paper dry.** Have them hold the paper up to the light, and **compare the two spots.** (*Note: Vegetable oil will leave a greasy, translucent spot; the water spot will disappear.*)
- ❖ **Challenge their thinking:**
  - What did you see after you rubbed each food?
  - How do the spots from your snacks compare with the vegetable oil spot and the water spot?
  - What does that tell you? Which snack has more fat? (*chips, cookie, candy bar, cheese, peanut butter*) **(POINT OUT:)** fruits, veggies, and some foods made from milk have little or no fat.
  - What else can you say about these snack foods? Encourage them to look at the *Feed Me!* poster to see how they fit in (and what they add to) a healthful way of eating.



## Activity 2: “5-20” Snack Vision

*Continue to have preteens discover more about these snack pairs using the “5-20” guide to food labeling, which they learned about in previous sessions.*

### Start by asking:

- ❖ Can you tell *if* a snack has any fat by looking at it? Can you tell *how much* fat it has?
- ❖ You probably won’t go around rubbing snack choices on paper to see if they have some fat. How can you find out without rubbing them on paper? (*Nutrition Facts on food labels give the types and amounts of fats in one serving of a food. The “5-20” guide helps you see if a food has a little or a lot of fat.*)

**Again in small groups, have preteens check the *Nutrition Facts Cards* for their two snacks.** They’ll see *how much* fat and other nutrients their snacks have. **ASK:**

- ❖ Does either snack have *a little* or *a lot* of fat?
- ❖ Do these snacks have *a little* or *a lot* of any other nutrients? Do you need to eat *more* or *less* of these nutrients? Have them check the *Read It Before You Eat It!* poster.
- ❖ Which ones are your best bets for healthful eating? Why?
- ❖ Which snack will you choose? Why?
- ❖ Will you eat it from the package or a bowl? Why? **Talk about** serving size compared with amount of food usually eaten, and show “how much” affects the amounts of calories, fats, and other nutrients listed for one serving.
- ❖ What will you tell someone about making a snack choice from among these food pairs? **POINT OUT:** Many snacks that preteens like are high in fat. Try to choose lower fat snacks (fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lowfat foods made from milk) most of the time; that’s healthier.

**Encourage preteens to test other foods at home** by doing the paper-rubbing activity with their families. They can check Nutrition Facts for fat on the food label. It’s a fun way for them to share what they learned with their families.

## Activity 3: Snack Dilemmas

*Give preteens practice as they use decision-making steps to make their snack choices.*

**As a group, brainstorm snack dilemmas or situations.** Have one or more preteens write them on a large piece of paper so everyone can see. For example:

- ❖ You really feel stressed out with your homework. You need to “chill out” before you can really get into studying. You can decide if you choose to head to the kitchen for something to eat or do something else.
- ❖ You’re hanging out with your friends after school. Your stomachs are growling (big time), so all of you decide to find something to snack on.
- ❖ You’re really hungry for a snack. But there’s not much that’s ready to eat in your kitchen. There’s a bag of chips in easy reach.

**Together, pick one or more dilemmas to work on.**

- ❖ **Write it on large paper and label** as a “snack dilemma.” Underneath, write “snacking options,” “pros and cons,” and “snack choices.”
- ❖ **Have everyone pick a partner.** Give a marker and adhesive notes to each pair. Have the partners come up with snacktime options for each dilemma, then write their options on adhesive notes.
- ❖ **On other adhesive notes, have them write the pros and cons** of each snack option.

**Bring the group back together to decide.** Keep the discussion open so preteens can talk freely about their snack choices. For each situation:

- ❖ **Have the partners share their snacking options and pros and cons.** Have them post their notes on the large paper.
- ❖ **As a group, eliminate options** after going over the pros and cons. Remove the adhesive notes for those options.
- ❖ **Talk about the choices they keep.** **POINT OUT:** that most situations—including snacking—have more than one good choice. They need to choose what’s right for them and try to keep the values they have about health in mind!

**Use this activity as a chance to talk about:**

- ❖ *What they’d snack on*—food-group snacks, substituting high-fat snacks for those with less fat. Encourage fruits, vegetables, whole-grain foods, and calcium-rich snacks containing milk.
- ❖ *How much they’d snack on*—paying attention to serving sizes by eating sensible amounts of snacks.
- ❖ *What they might do instead*—doing something active instead of snacking to relieve stress, boredom, or loneliness.

## Activity 4: Roll It Up!

*As a quick, fun, and healthful snack they can also make at home, have preteens make a quick portable snack: Peanut Butter Rollups.*

### Prepare Peanut Butter Rollups:

- ❖ **Give preteens a chance to wash their hands before handling food.**

Talk about this food safety tip. Refer to the messages on the *FIGHT BAC!* poster.

**Food Safety-Smarts:** Fruits and vegetables are healthful afterschool snacks. Rinse them under running water before you eat them.

- ❖ **Have two preteens help you get ready:** Place tortillas on a paper plate, get out peanut butter, and serve both with utensils; drain pineapple chunks, slice bananas, rinse lettuce or sprouts, shred or grate rinsed carrots; put each topping on a serving plate with utensils; set paper plates, knives, and napkins on the table.
- ❖ **Have them make their rollup** by spreading a tortilla with peanut butter, topping it with fruits or vegetables, and then rolling it up. Let them choose which fruits or vegetables they'd like on their "rollup."

*As they eat, talk about the "rollup." Use the Nutrition Facts Cards and the Feed Me! poster to prompt discussion.* **ASK:**

- ❖ Why is your Peanut Butter Rollup a good choice?
- ❖ How does it add some different foods to your food choices?
- ❖ How can you enjoy peanut butter, which is a higher fat food like cheese, yet still get less fat in your food choices?
- ❖ How will you make your "rollup" if you make this snack at home?
- ❖ How will the foods you use compare?

## Wrapping Up: What's yourCHOICE?

Wrap up by making “yourCHOICE” action plans for making snack choices.

Review what they learned about this topic. (ASK:)

- ❖ Why pay attention to what snacks you pick and how much of them you eat? **Talk about** the food energy (calories) and nutrients; what happens when you snack too much; what happens when candy and chips always replace foods with more nutrients.
- ❖ What quick food-group snacks can you eat at school? At a fast-food place? At home? With your friends?
- ❖ How can you make sure those foods are available when you are hungry for a snack?
- ❖ How can you snack without giving up your favorite snack foods? **Talk about** sharing with a friend, eating a smaller amount, eating these foods less often.
- ❖ What changes can you make for smarter snacking choices? Why? **Talk about the goals and actions** they can take. *(For example, GOAL: Eat more fruits and less candy when I want a sweet snack. Actions: Ask my family to buy fruits for quick snacks. Make a fruit smoothie at home as a snack drink. Tuck an apple or banana in my backpack for a snack.)*

On their “yourCHOICE” handout, have each person write a goal and three steps he or she can take this week to make snack choices count for healthful eating. (Note: At the next session, ask them what actions they actually took.)

Have the participants see how they did with the goal and action steps each person wrote on their own “yourCHOICE” handout for the last topic. They can check (✓) the steps they took so far. (Optional) Each person who took at least one action receives some form of recognition.

Collect their handouts to use in upcoming sessions.